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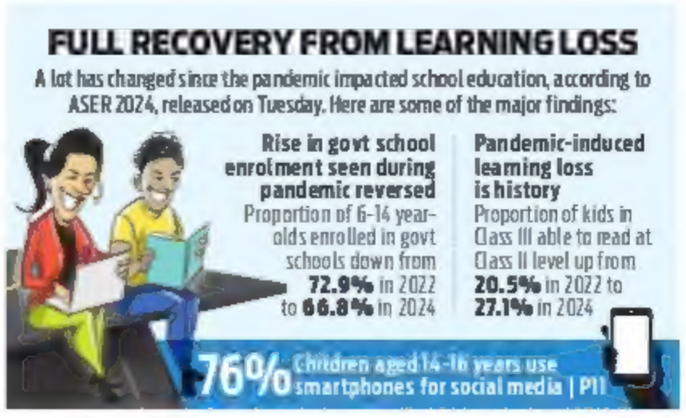
FULL RECOVERY FROM LEARNING LOSS
A lot has changed since the pandemic impacted school education, according to ASER 2024, released on Tuesday. Here are some of the major findings:
Rise in govt school enrolment seen during pandemic reversed
Proportion of 6-14 year-olds enrolled in govt schools down from 72.9% in 2022 to 66.8% in 2024
Pandemic-induced learning loss is history
Proportion of kids in Class III able to read at Class II level up from 20.5% in 2022 to 27.1% in 2024
76% Children aged 14-16 years use smartphones for social media | PTI

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First call: Don nudges Modi to buy US weapons

Says he expects Modi to do 'what is right' on return of undocumented Indians in the US

JAYANTH JACOB @ New Delhi

INDIA should look at buying more American security equipment to make the bilateral trade ties equitable, US President Donald Trump told Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his telephone call on Monday, the White House said.

Separately, Trump told reporters that Modi might visit the US in February. Sources said both countries are looking at finalising dates for a meeting in February or March.

PM TO VISIT U.S.

Trump said Modi is likely to visit the US in February. According to sources, both sides are working to finalise mutually convenient dates in February or March

Responding to a query, Trump said he and Modi discussed various issues including immigration. The US president said he hopes Modi "will do what's right" regarding the return of Indians who came to the US illegally.

Meanwhile, Trump reiterated his stance on imposing tariffs on countries that 'harm' the US. Speaking to House Republicans at a Florida retreat on Monday, he called out China and Brazil for having high tariffs. He also put India in this category, signalling the complex nature of diplomatic negotiations ahead.

In its statement on the Modi-Trump telecon, the White House said it was a productive call. It said the two leaders expressed their desire to deepen bilateral cooperation and discussed important issues including security in the Indo-Pacific, West Asia, and Europe.

"The President emphasized the importance of India increasing its procurement of American-made security equipment and moving toward a fair bilateral trading relationship," it said.

The US is India's largest trade partner and the two-way trade between the two nations surpassed $118 billion in 2023-24, with India recording $32 billion surplus.

The White House said Trump and Modi emphasized their commitment to "advance the US-India strategic partnership and the Indo-Pacific Quad partnership, with India hosting Quad Leaders for the first time later this year."

PHOTO: P JAWAHAR

13 DEVIS HONOURED

(First row from left) Suchithra Balasubramanian (Harikatha exponent), Vishnuvardhan (film director who received the award on behalf of his wife Anu Vardhan), G Brinda (choreographer and director), Arundhathi Subramaniam (poet and author); (2nd row) Omana Thomas (educator), Rajavalli Rajiv (entrepreneur), Khatija Rahman (musician), Sudha Ragunathan (Carnatic vocalist), Jerlin Anika (Arjuna awardee); (3rd row) Chitra Visweswaran (danseuse), Preethi Srinivasan (Co-founder, Soulfree), Dr Sudha Seshayyan (director, SASTRA University, Chennai) got the awards. Preetha Reddy (V-C of Apollo Hospitals), Prabhu Chawla (Editorial Director of TNIE), Lakshmi Menon (CEO of TNIE) and Santwana Bhattacharya (Editor of TNIE) are also seen | P7

EXPRESS READ

Kris Gopalakrishnan booked under SC/ST Act

Bengaluru: The police have registered an FIR against Infosys co-founder Senapathy Kris Gopalakrishnan, Indian Institute of Science (IISc) director Govindan Rangarajan, former director Padmanabhan Balaram and 15 members from IISc under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Act. P5

Stage collapses at UP religious event, 7 killed

Baghpat (UP): Seven people died and at least 60 were injured when a temporary wooden structure collapsed at a religious event in Baraut city of Uttar Pradesh on Tuesday. The incident occurred during a programme organised for the 'Abhishek' of Lord Adinath. P12

FROM HISTORY TO AI, A STAGE FOR DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

INCISIVE discussions on education, culture, and governance captivated audience as scholars articulated their vision on the second day of the 13th edition of the ThinkEdu Conclave 2025 hosted by *The New Indian Express* in Chennai. With focus on history, technology, morality, and skilling, speakers addressed India's pressing challenges and opportunities at the event, presented by SASTRA University, on Tuesday.

Karnataka IT/BT Minister Priyank Kharge addressed India's skilling crisis, outlining Karnataka's initiatives in areas like semiconductor and AI. Tanuj Bhojwani and Professor Venkatesh Balasubramanian spoke about India's potential as a global AI leader while addressing ethical and societal challenges.

Economist Sanjeev Sanyal opened the day by revisiting 'Lost History,' highlighting neglected revolutionaries like Mewa Singh Lopoke and VVS Aiyar. He argued for rewriting the 'biased colonial narratives'. Author Vikram Sampath expanded on this, examining polarising figures like Tipu Sultan and Veer Savarkar and calling for diverse perspectives in decoding history. BJP state president K Annamalai advocated for restoring Tamil Nadu's cultural and economic strength, spelling out strategies and solutions for the state's environmental and educational challenges. While Telangana Deputy CM Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka underscored the need for cooperative governance, Bihar Governor Arif Mohammed Khan called for an education system rooted in morality and liberation.

TNIE Editor Santwana Bhattacharya, Karnataka IT/BT Minister Priyank Kharge and TNIE Political Editor Bansy Kalappa at a discussion on 'INDIA and Congress: State of Suspension' during the ThinkEdu Conclave in Chennai on Tuesday | ASHWIN PRASATH

Historian Anirudh Kanisetti traced the Chola Empire's legacy of cultural integration, demonstrating India's enduring diversity. Discussions on civility in public discourse featured Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan, Dr Kanimozhi NVN Somu, Gautami, and Sasikanth Senthil critiquing the rise of hate speech and sensationalism on social media. Swami Shailendra Saraswati reflected on religion's spiritual essence. The day concluded with Carnatic vocalist Sandeep Narayan and artist Radhe Jaggi, who captivated the audience with insights into art's transformative power.

Over two days, the conclave featured 40 speakers across 25 sessions and 16 hours of debates. Attended by 600 students and 500 delegates, the event reinforced its legacy as India's premier education platform, offering perspectives on the nation's past, present, and future.

MORE REPORTS ON: P8, P9

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